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Smith's Unlucky Day



T. S. DENISON & COMPANY
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SMITH'S UNLUCKY DAY

A COMEDY

BY

CHARLES NEVERS HOLMES

AUTHOR OF

"Their First Quarrel."



CHICAGO
T. S. DENISON & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

PS635
29H749

SMITH'S UNLUCKY DAY

MR. JOHN SMITH.....*A Business Man*
MRS. JOHN SMITH*His Wife*

PLACE—*Anywhere.*

TIME—*After Dinner.*

COSTUMES.

MR. SMITH—Business suit.

MRS. SMITH—Home evening dress.

TIME OF PLAYING—*About Twenty Minutes.*

PROPERTIES.

Cigar for Mr. Smith.

A skein of silk, needle, scissors, thimble and material to embroider for Mrs. Smith.

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SMITH'S UNLUCKY DAY

SCENE: *A room in the Smiths' apartment, cozily furnished, table in center with lighted reading lamp, magazines, newspapers and two letters on table covering, a large rug under the table; window at right of room, picture at right of window; telephone on stand and chair at left of window; door at rear of room, pictures on right and left of door; fireplace, fire tongs in front at left of room, clock, etc., on mantle over fireplace, picture at right and door at left of fireplace. Three comfortable chairs around table and other electric lights burning in the room. A good fire in the fireplace.*

As the curtain rises, Mr. and Mrs. Smith are seated by the table, Mr. Smith smoking, gazing thoughtfully into the fireplace, Mrs. Smith quietly at work on some embroidery. Both Mr. and Mrs. Smith are not over thirty.

MRS. SMITH (*looking up from her embroidery*). What's the matter with you tonight, John? You seem so—moody.

MR. SMITH (*throwing his cigar impatiently into the fireplace*). Edith, it's my unlucky day—once a year just on this day everything goes wrong with me.

MRS. S. (*unrolling more silk from her skein and rethreading her needle*). Nonsense, John! That's simply superstition—

MR. S. (*lighting another cigar and casting the match into the fireplace*). It's true, nevertheless—the 28th day of February is always my unlucky day. I've never known it to fail.

MRS. S. (*embroidering again*). It is a pity you were not born on the 29th of February—what a lot of poor luck you would have escaped!

MR. S. (*leaning back in his chair and smoking "rings" from his cigar*). It's no joke, I can tell you. Don't you

remember that on the 28th day of February, a year ago, I broke my arm?

MRS. S. (*looking up from her embroidery*). I don't remember the exact date, but you certainly broke your arm. However, it was your own fault—you said so—and I can't see why you should blame the day for it.

MR. S. (*still smoking "rings" from his cigar*). Well, the year before last, on February the 28th, our apartment was burned. I guess you remember that all right.

MRS. S. (*embroidering again*). Yes, John, it did take place on the 28th of February; but, then, we were *lucky* to escape with our lives.

MR. S. (*rising from his chair and absent-mindedly flicking the ashes from his cigar into the fireplace*). As I have been sitting here I've been reviewing my whole life, and I haven't the least doubt, in my own mind, that February 28th is *my* particularly *unlucky* day.

MRS. S. (*cutting the thread with her scissors*). But what about today, John? Has it been *particularly unlucky*?

MR. S. (*standing with his back to the fireplace*). Of course! That is, perhaps not quite as unlucky as usual; but because this day has not been *quite* as unlucky I am feeling a little nervous, for I expect some more poor luck—there's no telling how disastrous—will overtake me before midnight.

MRS. S. (*laughing*). Perfectly *absurd*, John! And *what* is the ill luck which has occurred to you already?

MR. S. (*turning to poke up the fire with the tongs*). Oh, a certain stock which I invested in recently—"Ginger, preferred"—dropped five points in the market this morning.

MRS. S. (*abruptly stopping her embroidery*). Ginger, preferred!" (*Very sharply.*) Do you mean, John Smith, that you have been speculating *again*? Didn't you promise me, solemnly, that your speculation in "Pepper, common," would be the last, the very *last* time you would risk money in the stock market? (*Angrily.*) And is *this* why you couldn't spare me even \$25 to buy a new hat?

MR. S. (*puffing rather nervously on his cigar*). But, my

dear, "Ginger, preferred," looked to everybody like a "sure thing." And if the stock had risen a few points you might have bought several new hats.

MRS. S. (*hastily taking a newspaper from the table and turning its pages*). Are you *certain*, John, that this stock has dropped as much as you said?

MR. S. (*positively*). Yes, I am *certain*; that is, it had dropped five points at noon. Of course, if today were not February 28th, there might be a chance that "Ginger, preferred," would recover some of its loss before the market closed. But that would be impossible—*today*!

MRS. S. (*glancing over the stock market quotations in the newspaper*). Nevertheless, I'm going to make sure. Oh, here it is! Yes—"Ginger, preferred"—"98". Does "98" mean 98 cents or 98 dollars, John?

MR. S. (*quickly, leaving the fireplace*). What's *that*! You say "98." Why, that's the quotation before it commenced to drop. Perhaps it *has* risen since noon. (*Hurriedly taking the paper from her*.) Well, it is "98"! Hoorah! (*Throwing the newspaper on the table and starting towards the telephone*.) Guess I'll telephone to Mr. Byem—he'll know—

MRS. S. (*taking the newspaper from the table and looking at its date, with a gasp*). O—John—this is yesterday's paper!

MR. S. (*coming back from telephone very slowly*). Thunderation! Why didn't you say so *before*? Well, I haven't had the courage since noon to inquire for any more quotations of "Ginger, preferred," but (*taking another newspaper from the table and glancing at its date*) here's today's paper (*opening it and turning the pages*) and it may be (*studying the stock market quotations*)—it may—possibly—be—ah, there it is—"Ginger, preferred"—highest "98," lowest—what!—"88"? Gee! (*He casts the paper back weakly upon the table and returns to his chair, into which he sinks still more weakly*.) Gee! It's dropped five more points. Yes, *this* is February 28th all right!

MRS. S. (*sympathetically*). John, I am awfully sorry—

I really am, dear; but let me tell you something that will cheer you up a little. (*Happily.*) Oh, John, can you guess what it is?

MR. S. (*hopelessly*). No—nothing that could cheer me up on *this* day!

MRS. S. (*still more happily*). Well, I received a letter from mother this morning—

MR. S. (*interrupting quickly*). So, then, she has decided to go to live with Arthur and Helen. (*Rather cheerfully.*) That is indeed a *very* sensible decision on her part—

MRS. S. (*speaking very happily*). No, John, mother has decided to come to live with *us*! Now haven't I told you some *good* news?

MR. S. (*half rising from his chair*). W-h-a-t! What's that? Mother—has—decided—to come—to live—with *us*!

MRS. S. (*smilingly*). Yes, dear—she has—to be with us as long as she lives.

MR. S. (*faintly*). But I thought she had made up her mind to live with Arthur and Helen, and I supposed that when her mind was once made up she never changed it.

MRS. S. (*unrolling some silk from her skein, preparing to embroider again*). I am *so* happy that mother is going to make her home with us—think of it, John—she is coming here—tomorrow!

MR. S. (*gloomily, sinking back into the depths of his chair*). This is February 28th all right, all right!

MRS. S. (*in amazement, stopping her embroidering*). W-h-y—John Smith!

MR. S. (*still more gloomily*). I can't for the life of me understand why she didn't come to live here *today* instead of tomorrow—

MRS. S. (*indignantly*). You ought to be ashamed of yourself, John Smith! *Before* we were married you used to say how *fortunate* you would be to have so noble a mother-in-law.

MR. S. (*very faintly*). Did I say *that*?

MRS. S. (*positively*). You certainly *did*! And, besides, you said that very same thing to mother.

MR. S. (*recovering a little, half rising from his chair, and throwing his cigar into the fireplace*). But, Edith, don't you see, I *never* expected that mother would come to live with us—

MRS. S. (*sharply*). John Smith, *before* we were married I heard you tell mother that you would be de-lighted if she would make her permanent home with us. (MR. S. *shakes his head*.) (*More sharply*.) Yes, you did, too, John Smith—I *heard* you!

MR. S. (*mournfully*). Well, I meant that I *never* expected that she would accept my offer. Of course, I *had* to say something like that.

MRS. S. (*angrily*). So you are in the habit of saying things that you don't mean! And this isn't the *first* time that you have admitted it to me. Mr. Smith, you are a hypocrite!

MR. S. (*rising from his chair, in protestation*). Now—Edith—

MRS. S. (*more angrily, also rising from her chair, her embroidery, skeins, etc., falling to the floor and being scattered about*). Yes, you are—a hypocrite—a shameless—insincere—hypocrite!

MR. S. (*rather weakly*). But I haven't objected to mother's coming to live with us. I merely said—

MRS. S. (*interrupting, sharply*). You said—that it would be unfortunate for mother to come to live with us—

MR. S. (*quickly*). You misunderstood me, my dear. What I meant was that if mother had come to live here *today* she would be—unlucky.

MRS. S. (*more calmly*). I wish you would say *exactly* what you mean, John Smith—and, besides, you said that you never expected that mother would come to live with us, and that your invitation to her was not sincere.

MR. S. (*nervously*). Well, you see I was so sure that she was going to live with Arthur and Helen—I never knew her to change her mind before—that—probably—owing to the sudden surprise—I said *some* things that I—didn't *exactly* mean. (*He stoops over and begins to pick*

up the embroidery, skeins, etc., which Mrs. S. has recently dropped.)

MRS. S. (*recovering her good nature*). Perhaps, John, I did misunderstand you—somewhat. But let's not quarrel any more. When mother arrives here tomorrow morning you will, of course, be on hand to welcome her—heartily—and make her feel perfectly at home.

MR. S. (*rising from the floor with the embroidery, skeins, etc.*). Certainly—cer-tainly—my dear! How very de-lightful it will be to have mother with us once more—it will indeed seem like old times!

MRS. S. (*receiving the embroidery, skeins, etc., from Mr. S., then reseating herself in the chair*). Thank you, John! (*Suddenly she gives a sort of gasp.*) O—John—if I didn't forget to tell you about a letter that came for you—mercy!—a week ago. (*She searches under the magazines and newspapers on the table and draws forth a letter which she hands to him.*) I do hope that it is not important.

MR. S. (*tearing open the envelope and examining the letter*). I hope it isn't! Let's see what it says:

“February 21, 1917.

“John Smith, Esq.

“Dear Sir: As the executors of the estate of your late uncle, Hezekiah Holcomb, we write to inform you that his will bequeaths you unconditionally a bequest of One Hundred Thousand dollars. At your earliest convenience please call at our office to arrange some of the necessary legal formalities.

“Respectfully,

“JONES & JONES, Attorneys-at-Law.”

MR. S. (*after a moment's pause, suddenly waving the letter wildly in the air, nearly upsetting the table lamp*). Wh-o-o-p! Whoop! A legacy of—(*he glances at the letter*)—let me look again—very carefully—yes—one hundred thousand dollars! *One hundred thousand dollars!* Gee!—one hundred thousand. (*Then, suddenly, his jubilation wanes.*) Oh—if only it wasn't the 28th of February—pretty soon I'll wake up and find myself in the poorhouse!

MRS. S. (*rising from her chair, taking the letter from him and hastily reading it over*). Do you think, John, that I may have my new hat for Easter?

MR. S. (*pinching himself vigorously*). Edith, if I don't wake up until tomorrow, you shall have a—*dozen* new hats!

MRS. S. (*handing the letter back to him*). Not a dozen, dear; that would be extravagant—only a half dozen.

MR. S. (*giving himself a few extra hard pinches*). I must be awake—or dead. No! I shall insist on your buying a dozen new hats—not one less! (*Thoughtfully.*) But I don't understand why they haven't communicated again with me—a hundred thousand dollars isn't a small sum and this letter is a week old.

MRS. S. (*suddenly, with another gasp*). O—John—if I didn't forget to tell you about a letter that came for you this very afternoon. I left it here on the table. (*Again she searches under the magazines and newspapers.*) Ah—this is it. (*Glancing at it.*) Why—it seems to be from the same people who wrote you the other letter—

MR. S. (*quickly taking the letter and tearing open its envelope*). Yes, it is from the same law firm—listen!

“February 28, 1917.

“John Smith, Esq.

“Dear Sir: Since writing the letter of February 21st. we have not heard from you. We should have written you again but for the fact that an unexpected and very important paper coming to light has modified considerably the terms and conditions of the will as we understood it a week ago. A codicil has been found, and, as a result, we regret to announce that your late uncle has left you only *one thousand* dollars instead of the hundred thousand dollars respecting which we recently wrote you. At your earliest convenience will you kindly call at our office to arrange some of the necessary legal formalities.”

(*A pause, then the clock on the mantle amid a deep silence begins to strike the hour of eight.*)

MR. S. (*after the clock stops striking, speaking very*

mournfully). Eight o'clock! Four long hours yet before tomorrow! (*He sinks down wearily in his chair.*)

MRS. S. (*using her handkerchief, tearfully*). I suppose that I shall have to go without a new hat for Easter. (*She also sinks down wearily in her chair.*)

MR. S. (*sitting up in his chair, with decision*). If I don't wake up again and find myself penniless, you shall still have a dozen new hats for Easter!

MRS. S. (*very joyfully*). O—John! (*The telephone rings.*)

MR. S. (*rising and going very slowly to the telephone*). I wonder *what* is coming—next! (*Taking down the receiver.*) Hello! Hello! Hello-hello! Who's this? *What* did you say? Guess you've got the wrong number, haven't you? Why, yes, I'm Mr. John Smith—*what* did you say? That you are my uncle? Won't you please speak a little *louder*—I can't exactly understand you—you are my uncle, Hezekiah Holcomb? *What's that?* Why, man, my Uncle Hezekiah died a while ago! I say, my Uncle Hezekiah died a while ago! *What's that?* *What!* I must be mistaken for *you* are my Uncle Hezekiah and you never felt better in your *life*? Oh-oh! I see—then you are not *dead* at all! W-h-y—how-do-you-do, Uncle Hezekiah! I'm aw-fully delighted to hear from you! I haven't heard your voice for *years* and you don't know *how* natural it sounds! *What's that?* You happened to be passing through town and called Edith and me up to tell us that you were—*what*?—that you were married this noon! Oh-oh! I see—to whom were you married, Uncle Hezekiah? Oh, it's a secret, is it, and I shall know very soon? Well, I'm sure that Edith and I congratulate you—heartily. How is Edith? Oh—*perfectly* well, thank you. Yes, we are *both* well—no—I don't think so—yes—isn't it, though? Good-bye, Uncle Hezekiah! (*Puts up receiver. Rising very limply from the telephone chair.*) Well, what do you think of *that*? The old man was always playing practical jokes on his friends and relatives—those letters from "Jones and Jones" were one of his jokes—but

(*a little vindictively*) perhaps this recent marriage of his may prove to be no joke!

MRS. S. (*using her handkerchief, tearfully*). Well—there's no new Easter hat for me!

MR. S. (*reseating himself in his former chair*). I'm sorry, Edith, but my telephone talk with Uncle Hezekiah seemed to "cap the climax"! (*The telephone rings.*) Won't you please answer the 'phone, Edith? I think it's about time that another member of the family should receive news of some poor luck.

MRS. S. (*rising from her seat and going to the telephone*). Perhaps this will be some good luck. (*Takes down the receiver.*) Hello! Hello! Yes, I am Mrs. Smith—w-h-y—hello, mother! What is that? You have just arrived in town? I didn't expect you until tomorrow, but your room is all ready for you—John and I will both of us be overjoyed to see you! What is that? What? What! (*She gasps for breath.*) What? You are! (*A short pause as Mrs. S. listens intently to what is being said to her.*) Am I surprised? No—I'm utterly thunder-struck! What did you say? You've got to go at once to catch your train and you will write me tomorrow? Well, good-bye, mother; good-bye! Best wishes for your journey! (*She slowly hangs up the receiver and rises from the telephone chair, returning towards the table. In a somewhat bewildered manner.*) John! What do you think? Mother isn't coming to live with us!

MR. S. (*in incredulous amazement, slowly, partly rising from his chair*). She—isn't—coming—to—live—with—us?

MRS. S. (*very sadly*). No, John—mother was married this noon to your Uncle Hezekiah Holcomb! (*She sinks down very weakly into her chair.*)

MR. S. (*suddenly rising wholly and energetically from his chair, bringing his hand down heavily upon the table*). G-r-e-a-t Scott! Your mother married—to Uncle Hezekiah? (*Rather jubilantly.*) Well, after all, I guess this 28th of February is Uncle Hezekiah's and not Smith's unlucky day!

CURTAIN.

The Call of Wohelo

By LINDSEY BARBEE.

Price, 25 Cents

A comedy drama in 3 acts; 10 females. Time, 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours.
Scene: 1 exterior. **Characters:** Ellen Ferris, Guardian of the Camp. Mrs. Vale, Camp mother. Blue Bird (Owaissa—Blue Bird), her young daughter. Wah-wah-taysee (Firefly), an Indian girl. Sylvia (Wayaka—See Beauty), a Camp ‘Misfit.’ Amy (Kee-wee—Rainbow Maid), a Torch Bearer. Marian (Disyadi—Moon Maid), A Fire Maker. Emily (Minnehaha—Laughing Water), a Wood Gatherer. Constance (Gaoh—Spirit of the Wind), a Wood Gatherer. Dorothy (To-he-ha—Humming Bird), a Wood Gatherer.

SYNOPSIS.

Act I.—Blue Bird runs errands for the busy Camp Fire girls, among whom Sylvia alone is idle. Sylvia is declared a Camp “misfit,” and Miss Ferris decides to make one last effort to interest her in Camp Fire life. A visitor, Miss Marshall, a noted Camp Fire worker, is promised and Amy tells a ghost story in which she herself is heroine. Wah-wah-taysee chants magic words and Sylvia promises to seek “the treasure.”

Act II.—Under Wah-wah-taysee’s tutelage, Sylvia becomes a very different girl, but the intimacy with the Indian girl brings criticism from her Camp Fire friends. The mention of Amy’s ghost produces peals of laughter, for constant watching has failed to detect “The Lady in White.” Miss Ferris announces that Miss Marshall will be present at the Council Fire. Amy persuades Marian and Sylvia to keep a last vigil for the ghost and they consent. Constance’s money disappears and suspicion turns to the Indian. Wah-wah-taysee sends a message. The ghost proves something of a sensation.

Act III.—The Council Fire. Miss Marshall and the Indian are discovered to be the same. Wah-wah-taysee tells her story and Sylvia is admitted to the rank of Wood Gatherer.

The Whole Truth

By LINDSEY BARBEE.

Price, 15 Cents

Comedy; 5 males, 4 females. Time, 40 minutes. At a dinner party on Midsummer Eve, a wish is made that each guest for the evening speaks nothing but the truth. Complexities arise, difficulties are straightened, the bogus English lord is unmasked and the mystery of the heiress is solved. Clever and humorous.

Her First Scoop

By LINDSEY BARBEE.

Price, 15 Cents

Comedy; 1 male, 2 females. Time, 45 minutes. A young newspaper woman, through nerve and clever strategy gains a coveted interview, thereby beating the rival papers with a story of special interest, which in a newspaper office is known as a “scoop.” The parley of wit and the scintillating dialogue will charm and delight.

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, Publishers
154 W. Randolph Street, CHICAGO

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All on a Summer's Day, 40 min. 4	6
April Fools, 30 min..... 3	
Assessor, The, 10 min..... 3	2
Baby Show at Pineville, 20 min. 19	
Billy's Chorus Girl, 25 min... 2	3
Billy's Mishap, 20 min..... 2	3
Borrowed Luncheon, 20 min.. 5	
Borrowing Trouble, 20 min.... 3	5
Case Against Casey, 40 min... 23	
Country Justice, 15 min.... 8	
Cow that Kicked Chicago, 20 m. 3	2
Divided Attentions, 35 min..... 1	4
Dude in a Cyclone, 20 min.... 4	2
Family Strike, 20 min..... 3	3
First-Class Hotel, 20 min.... 4	
For Love and Honor, 20 min.. 2	1
Fudge and a Burglar, 15 min.. 5	
Fun in Photo Gallery, 30 min... 6	10
Great Medical Dispensary, 30 m. 6	
Great Pumpkin Case, 30 min... 12	
Hans Von Smash, 30 min.... 4	3
I'm Not Mesilif at All, 25 min. 3	2
Initiating a Granger, 25 min.. 8	
Irish Linen Peddler, 40 min... 3	3
Is the Editor In? 20 min... 4	2
Kansas Immigrants, 20 min.... 5	1
Men Not Wanted, 30 min.... 8	
Mike Donovan's Courtship, 15 m. 1	3
Mother Goose's Goslings, 30 m. 7	9
Mrs. Jenkins' Brilliant Idea, 35m. 8	
Mrs. Stubbins' Book Agent, 30 m. 3	2
My Wife's Relations, 1 hr.... 4	6
Not a Man in the House, 40 m. 5	
Pair of Lunatics, 20 min.... 1	1
Patsy O'Wang, 35 min..... 4	3
Pat, the Apothecary, 35 min.. 6	2
Persecuted Dutchman, 30 min. 6	3
Regular Fix, 35 min..... 6	4
Second Childhood, 15 min.... 2	2
Shadows, 35 min..... 2	2
Sing a Song of Seniors, 30 min. 7	
Taking Father's Place, 30 min. 5	3
Taming a Tiger, 30 min.... 3	
That Rascal Pat, 30 min.... 3	2
Those Red Envelopes, 25 min. 4	4
Too Much of a Good Thing, 45 min. 3	6
Turn Him Out, 35 min..... 3	2
Two Aunts and a Photo, 20 m. 4	
Two Gentlemen in a Fix, 15 m. 2	
Two Ghosts in White, 20 min.. 8	
Two of a Kind, 40 min.... 2	3
Uncle Dick's Mistake, 20 min.. 3	2
Wanted a Correspondent, 45 m. 4	4
Wanted a Hero, 20 min..... 1	1

	M. F.
Wide Enough for Two, 45 min. 5	2
Wrong Baby, 25 min..... 8	
Yankee Peddler, 1 hr..... 7	3

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